



## How can I prepare for the birth of my baby?

The last few months of pregnancy are a good time to think about the birth of your baby. Here you can learn more about perineal massage, warm compresses, support during labor, induction of labor and how to manage contractions. Medical studies show these methods can help you have a safe and healthy birth. Write down your questions and talk with your provider.

### How can perineal massage help me prepare for birth?

The perineum is the area at the back of your vagina. Try massaging this area daily for 5-10 minutes in the last 1-2 months of pregnancy. You may be less likely to need stitches for a tear during the birth of your baby. Follow these instructions to learn how you can do perineal massage: [bit.ly/MassagePerineal](https://bit.ly/MassagePerineal)

### Should I use warm compresses while pushing?

Putting warm compresses on your bottom while you are pushing might lower the chance that you have a severe tear in your vagina. Remember to ask your labor nurse or provider to apply a warm washcloth or compress to the outside of your vagina while you are pushing.

### Do I need a support person during labor?

Support from someone like a doula or a trained family member can help you while you are in labor. A doula is a person who stays with you during labor and delivery to help support you. Some of the benefits of having continuous support are having a shorter labor, needing less pain medication, less chance



of needing a C-section and a better labor experience. Doula services are available in the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area. Some of these are volunteer and some are fee-based. Birthing classes are also available. Classes might help your family member learn how to support you during your labor.

### Learn more about perineal massage

1. Go to “DukeMyChart.org”
2. Log in with your username and password, or create a new account.
3. Click the yellow “Health” folder.
4. Select “Search Health Library”
5. Search for “Perineal Massage” and select “Childbirth: Perineal Massage Before Labor ” OR scan the QR code:



# Duke Obstetrics and Gynecology

## What is an induction of labor and do I need one?

An induction is when medicine is given to you to start labor instead of waiting for you to go into labor on your own. You may need an induction for medical reasons. Some healthy women also choose to have an induction of labor at 39 weeks of pregnancy. A large medical study, called the ARRIVE study, found being induced at 39 weeks is safe for first-time moms with out medical conditions and may have some benefits. In the study, women who had an induction at 39 weeks were less likely to develop high blood pressure or preeclampsia and had a slightly lower chance of having a C-section. If you would like to learn more, we recommend discussing induction with your provider.

## What can I do to manage pain in labor?

Now is a good time to start thinking about how you want to manage your contractions in labor. A support person is important. There are other ways to help you manage labor, too.

Follow these instructions to learn how you can manage pain in labor:

[bit.ly/EpiduralDuringChildbirth](https://bit.ly/EpiduralDuringChildbirth)



*Duke Ob/Gyn's mission is to deliver better health and hope to women and their families through compassionate care, innovation, education and discovery.*

## Learn more about managing pain in labor

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Additional information:

- ACOG Committee Opinion 766: Approaches to Limit Intervention During Labor and Birth. Feb 2019. Summary available at: [bit.ly/2D91dPK](https://bit.ly/2D91dPK)
- ACOG Practice Advisory: Clinical guidance for integration of the findings of The ARRIVE Trial: Labor Induction versus Expectant Management in Low-Risk Nulliparous Women. Aug 2018. Available at: [bit.ly/3e0M970](https://bit.ly/3e0M970)